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THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GT. BRITAIN

REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE 80th ANNUAL CONFERENCE
HELD ON 20th, 21st and 22nd APRIL, 1984

(To be read in conjunction with the Final Agenda,
and EC Report to Conference)

| <u>ATTENDANCES:</u> | | <u>No. of Delegates</u> | <u>Branches not</u> |
|---------------------|------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| | | <u>Sitting</u> | <u>Represented</u> |
| Friday 20th April | 10.10 a.m. | 38 | Sunderland |
| " " " | 2.50 p.m. | 41 | " |
| Saturday 21st " | 1.15 p.m. | 38 | Kensington and Sunderland |
| Sunday 22nd " | 10.15 a.m. | 32 | Sunderland |
| " " " | 2.15 p.m. | 37 | Kensington and Sunderland |

FINANCIAL REPORT

| <u>Income</u> | <u>£</u> | <u>Expenditure</u> | <u>£</u> |
|---------------------|----------|---------------------|----------|
| Collections: Friday | 82.05 | Hall Hire | 455.02 |
| Saturday | 66.24 | Delegates' expenses | 117.00 |
| Sunday | 49.66 | Canteen purchases | 85.04 |
| | 197.95 | | |
| Canteen takings | 151.25 | | |
| | 349.20 | | 657.06 |

Book Sales: £94.00 (plus invoices issued, amounting to £26)
Literature Sales: £96.40 (plus invoices issued, amounting to £216.55)

A.G. Atkinson
General Secretary

April 1984

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REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE 80th ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1984

Friday 20 April 1984 - commenced 10.10 a.m.

Com. B. Valinas (Central) was elected Chair and Com. H. Valour (Glasgow), Vice-Chair, and it was agreed that Standing Orders Committee act as Tellers.

Order of business:

Resolution - C. Slapper and C. Begley (Islington) "That Resolutions 7 (c), (d) and (e) be taken first business on Saturday afternoon." CARRIED 8 - 7

Resolution - C. Slapper and Ahmad (Islington) "That Branch verbal reports be taken first business on Sunday morning." CARRIED 8 - 5

EC Report to Conference: A few minor errors corrected - EC attendances should have been for year ended 1983, not 1984 - ditto for branches and membership date.

All Forms 'C' had been received except for Sunderland and no delegates had arrived.

A number of queries on the Master Form 'C' were dealt with re dues collected, literature accounts outstanding and Camden's "meetings held" figures, which had been omitted.

Party Ballots: Resolution 2(b) and Amendment:

Marshall (E. London): After one year of supportive statements, branch does not think it worth the time and effort.

Cook (Birmingham): A bit early to judge. Lancaster say they don't know London members, have nothing to go by and they might as well not bother.

D'Arcy (Camden): I don't know half the people standing for the EC and I've been in the Party 40 years.

Atkinson (EC/Gen. Sec.): Qualities of candidates best known by branches nominating them. Lancaster members did not return their ballot papers anyway.

Marshall (Ballot Cttee): We're not getting many candidates for the EC: one day many members may stand and then we will discover the amount of work is enormous for the present size of the Party. Committee had to go back to the EC on how to implement it.

AMENDMENT LOST 13 - 37; RESOLUTION LOST 15 - 35

Resolution 2(c) was therefore not voted on.

Membership: Resolution 3(a):

Begley (Islington): Party should increase membership in present recession, although it has risen with more activity in places like Liverpool, Doncaster etc.

RESOLUTION CARRIED 40 - 3

Resolution 3(b):

C. Slapper (Islington): We should look scientifically at the significantly higher than in recent past increase in membership last year, so as to expand on areas which have been most successful.

Atkinson (Gen. Sec.): Gave analysis of replies on Forms 'A' last year to question how did applicant come into contact with the Party - personal contact being largest number.

D'Arcy (Camden): Figure is far short of war-time numbers joining.

May (N.W. London): Why waste Central Organiser's time: doesn't need scientific investigation.

Coleman (Central Organiser): Gen. Sec's figures not very helpful. It's just one point on Form 'A' and not necessarily what makes people join. Some may not join immediately after contact. Can only be concerned with present not past. We have to look in percentage terms and last year it was 15%. We have to do far more work per member, then the amount of activity per member who comes in gets less.

Warnecke (W. London): Don't find subject at all interesting. Let's carry on as we are - no need for this - come down to earth.

Howell (Guildford): If we carry on as we are, we shall remain small. It is unscientific to say "through reading the SS" - they buy it, they talk to members etc.

C. Slapper (Islington): Some of the categories overlap. Guardian adverts not only create members but people who read our literature. We must ask ourselves about our growth.

RESOLUTION CARRIED 40 - 6

FLOOR RESOLUTION: Critchfield and Skinner (Kensington): "This Conference recommends that any report by the Central Organiser on the reasons for the recent growth in membership should also take account of reasons for members leaving."

Critchfield (Kensington): While looking at rise in growth of membership we should look into why people leave.

Coleman (Cntrl Organiser): Not medically qualified to go into some of the reasons. Difficult to know about members leaving - something branches should be reporting to the EC and be better documented.

Greenham (EC): Worried when someone who has been in Party a short time leaves, and the

Survey should go into this. We have to get members in and keep them in.
Critchfield (Kensington): Reason for members leaving is not always simple.

FLOOR RESOLUTION CARRIED 27 - 4

Literature/Socialist Standard:

Resolution 6(a), Amendment and Addendum:

C. Slapper (Islington): We should push the SS more. Since the Party spends £12,000 on it, it should be a priority to spend 10% of that on advertising it as a commercial product. Should be a special person to do this - SSPC has more than enough to do. Pressure should be put on chain-stores and we should look again at commercial distribution - sooner or later we'll have to use such a method.

Vein (Enfield & Haringey): No point in distribution without advertising and vice versa. It should not be one member but a committee, if not the SSPC.

D'Arcy (Camden): We should ask if there is a connection between drop in sales and drop-off of outdoor meetings. Sales won't rise unless we get out on the streets and meetings.

May (N.W. London): Branch opposed: national publicity campaign very costly, especially when we're almost broke. Shops have to make profit out of selling space. Branch not pessimistic. Sales rest on the membership.

G. Wilson (N.W. London): There's so much negative stuff on the Agenda - all this triviality.

Goodman (EC): Days of large indoor and outdoor meetings more or less gone - we have to look at other ways. We tend to think about the PDC fiasco when we think about doing this more professionally. It is possible to use shops and we have to be persistent. SSPC's job is to get out the SS.

Atkinson (Gen Sec): CLSC reported recently on commercial distribution by Scottish & Northern Book Co-operative (previously PDC) but were not in favour of any arrangement with this firm. Another committee is going into the whole matter.

Simpson (S.W. London): Branch opposed to this because it should be dealt with in the CLSC's terms of reference.

Dufton (CLSC): It is not within the Committee's terms of reference to approach newsagents, but if the Party wants this, we will do it.

C. Slapper (Islington): Important reason in this case to expand number of members covering the work. Different from CLSC work and needs different approach. I would be prepared to do this though there may be other members better able. Not helpful constantly referring to the past: we must look forward.

ADDENDUM LOST 7 - 43; AMENDMENT LOST 2 - 48;

RESOLUTION CARRIED 39 - 6

AMENDMENTS TO RULE:

Rule 2: S.W. London Resolution and E. London & Kensington Amendments:

Simpson (S.W. London): Dues are the only known income of the Party. Consider £2 in relation to other subscriptions: my sports club and union cost more and £2 is less than lots of people spend in the pub at lunchtime. This increase is long overdue.

G. Wilson (N.W. London): Increase at this time is not on in the present climate.

Edwards (W. London): If members can't pay the increased rate there will be an increase in dues waived. Keep dues at minimum and people should be responsible enough to pay as much as they can.

AMENDMENT CARRIED 35 - 15; SUB-RESOLUTION CARRIED 34 - 16

Rule 2: Kensington Resolution and S.W. London Amendment:

Critchfield (Kensington): Proposal to make facility for waiving dues more flexible. Some people can be better off on the dole than in work: dues should be waived in cases of hardship. Opposed to amendment.

Trainer (S.W. London): We do not feel members should have to give reasons: they should be able to simply say that they cannot afford it.

Shannon (Lancaster): We don't like obligation creeping into the Party. We shouldn't coerce members into paying dues: they should be entitled to have them waived.

Moss (Swansea): Branch favours not having any mention of being out of employment. It goes back to when being unemployed meant being destitute. Same thing should apply to pensioners - Over 65.

Edinburgh delegate: No point in changing rule - branch has discretion.

Critchfield (Kensington): There have been cases where members applied to have dues waived for reasons other than hardship - mucking the Party about. This is to prevent this happening again.

AMENDMENT LOST 21 - 30; RESOLUTION LOST 17 - 34

Rule 2: Southend Resolution:

H. Cottis (Southend): Branch sees no reason why anyone should be under no obligation to pay dues except in cases of hardship. This should apply to pensioners. No case where they

should automatically be excused. The 40p proposed would have to be varied due to amendment to Rule 2 just passed, because it is 50% of the full dues.

RESOLUTION LOST 6 - 43

Rule 10: Islington resolution:

C. Slapper (Islington): Series of measures to reduce the EC: present structure could hold us back. EC has fulfilled its task in the past but has generally failed to generate activity: forced by the rules to do this, leading recently to their inactivity contributing to the branch withdrawing from the European election. In course of discussion branch became dubious about the working of this scheme and is split. EC has to be held back to merely administrative activity. Let's elect key committees directly. EC sitting between membership and the committees. Four rule changes and a resolution are involved in this.

Conference then agreed to take Resolution 2(a) in the name of Islington Branch, as the proposed amendments to Rule 10, 17, 19 and 20 depended on the outcome of this resolution.

Simpson (S.W. London): Branch felt this was a proposal for the future. At present each committee does its work independently. The EC receives information and has an overall view of what is going on in the Party and has powers to deal with any immediate situation. When the Party grows there will be not only a national EC in London but ECs in the different areas.

Vanni (Glasgow): Branch opposed to all this. Committees should be appointed. We can't get enough nominations for the EC now - we would have to call for nominations for another 6 committees. Would not get enough. Ballot paper would be incredibly complicated.

Ahmad (Islington): If all power is in the EC you create something like dictatorship. Intention is to create autonomy and freedom for branches.

L. Cox (EC): If carried, the only reference to the Party as a whole and opportunity to discuss would be twice a year at ADM and Conference. Members would be in the dark most of the time except in the results of their own efforts. Now there is day to day reference to the EC for guidance, finance or authorisation etc. and this is passed to branches through EC Minutes. The proposal could lead to more efficiency with the EC not constantly looking over Committees' shoulders, but the Party has wanted these controls.

Goodman (EC): How can the Party judge members' ability to carry out these tasks. You have voted to keep supportive statements.

Guildford delegate: It is too comprehensive for branch to vote on. We have not had a circular to be able to discuss this.

Cook (Birmingham): We only know members' abilities by what has been done in the past. No foolproof way of picking a committee: supportive statements might help a bit.

Buick (Enfield & Haringey): We should oppose this on grounds of democracy: you would have EC and these committees elected by the same people: if there was a dispute how could you resolve it as all would have been elected by the Party. Present arrangement is the most democratic and can be defended on grounds of principle.

Chesham (EC): It is right the EC is in a co-ordinating role and sits between the sub-committees and the membership. Recent example of SSPC opposed to Party entering the European Elections and the EC instructing it on the matter. This could not have happened under the proposals of 2 (a) and the EC would have had to wait until Conference.

C. Slapper (Islington): We did spring the resolution on you. Committees would be more directly responsible to the membership. This resolution says they would be our sub-committees, not the EC's. I endorse the comments by Cook: vote this down, but not for the wrong reasons.

RESOLUTION 2(a) LOST 10 - 37

IT WAS THEN AGREED that Amendments to Rules 10, 17, 19 and 20 automatically fall.

Rule 12:

Atkinson (Gen Sec): EC should not be reduced, so as to reflect the Party democratically. This is in line with the Islington proposals (Resolution 2(a) etc.) - it could end up with no EC at all and everything left in the end to the Gen Sec as a one-man band.

D'Arcy (Camden): Difficulty of getting members on the EC is well-known for reasons I won't go into. The greatest number should sit, consistent with getting on with the business. You have to learn something from the past. 14 members are not always there every week.

L. Cox (EC): I don't know the reasons why competent members will not come forward for the EC: there is an obligation and duty to the Party to spell them out so we all know what the problem is. If you reduce the EC you are not allowing for absences due to holidays, sicknesses, etc. It would be even less representative of the Party.

Cook (Birmingham): 50% of the Party is outside London: EC is representative of those living in the London area. EC is administrative and controlling and to some extent policy-

atches on the EC.

G. Wilson (N.W. London): Members don't stand because of the wrangles and acrimony. People don't go on the EC to be abused.

Vanni (Glasgow): In the past 1 vacancy would produce 10 nominations. It is a matter of necessity. If we could get 14 nominations or more, Glasgow would not have taken up the cudgels this year.

Coleman (EC): I was on EC 6 years: it spent a great deal of its time having views repeated by people and took active members away from other work. We don't want certain members on the EC - that's why we have elections. Only way to save the situation is to reduce the size and not get members on the EC by default. In 1904 they had 10 members on the EC.

AMENDMENT TO RULE 12 CARRIED 30 - 21

AMENDMENT TO RULE 13 then voted on: AMENDMENT CARRIED 34 - 16

SUB-RESOLUTION CARRIED 33 - 16

Amendments to Rule 33 and 26:

Moss (Swansea): Branch concerned that EC has power under Rule 33 to suspend a member from Party activity, i.e. that the member is treated as guilty. The last Party Poll was called by 7 EC members, whereas a previous Party Poll was at the behest of 9 branches - a sizeable portion of the Party. Branches should support the amendment to Rule 33 and consequently to Rule 26.

Trainer (S.W. London): Swansea missing an important fact - the EC raised the matter and it was discussed at ADM, which called for a Party Poll.

Simpson (S.W. London): The amendment means that a member will no longer be suspended: the Party has the right to waive all responsibility for that member up to the Party Poll.

Ahmad (Islington): Swansea on right tack - it should be the job of the Party as a whole.

D'Arcy (Camden): Rule is a sound proposition - it is just that the EC abused it to clobber Martin.

Carter (E. London): If you don't suspend a member once charge has been made, you are leaving the door open for that member to carry on in any activity alleged to be detrimental. It is a safeguard.

Moss (Swansea): ADM did not call the Poll, the EC called it according to Rule. The Rule may well have been abused but if it can be abused, there is something wrong with the Rule. We don't want a member not to be suspended but Party Poll only called on the request of the Party not the EC.

AMENDMENT TO RULE 33 LOST 18 - 26

IT WAS THEREFORE AGREED THAT THE AMENDMENT TO RULE 26 FELL

Fraternal greetings were read from the SP of New Zealand and from the WSP of Australia, the latter in the form of a letter from Com. Bill Robertson in Perth, Western Australia. Verbal greetings were received on behalf of Com. Frances Ambridge (Swansea), who had been unable to attend this Conference.

Two comrades from the WSP of Ireland were present, and Com. Brian Montague was invited to the platform and he addressed Conference on activity in Ireland.

Floor Resolution: Skinner and O'Brien (Kensington): "This Conference recommends that the decision to reduce the membership of the EC to ten should be implemented in the elections for the 1985 EC. If meanwhile the EC should be reduced by 'natural wastage' there should be no action to raise its membership above ten".

CARRIED 32 - 6

Amendment to Rule 27a:

H. Cottis (Southend): It is necessary to amend the Rules to include European elections.

D'Arcy (Camden): In what way does the European election come into the Declaration of Principles. It does not concern the Party, it is a collection of businessmen with limited powers from the member states. I suspect members in favour of this as a gimmick to put the Party on the map. 1979 leaflet said it was useless. What will happen if the British capitalist class withdraws from this.

C. Slapper (Islington): The spirit of the D of P commits us to taking over every body of power, national or local. It was written long before a European trading bloc. You can extrapolate outwards. Nothing to lose and everything to gain by taking part in propaganda possibilities. Move away from parochial attitudes.

W. Knox (Edinburgh): Not sure Rule 27a related to the Party's principles. Case D'Arcy puts forward could apply to local councils which can be stripped of powers vested in them. It is an excellent opportunity - main parties content to put only so much effort into it: a good chance to publicise the case.

P. Lawrence (EC): Clause 6 emphasises that there is no distinction between levels of capitalist power - it says the machinery of government and the powers of government. If

you say only nationally, it would envisage capturing political power at national level but opponents in control of local government, and, up-dating, the European Parliament. Members in 1904 did not distinguish between different levels on the exercise of capitalist power. There is no difficulty. Machinery of government explained in our pamphlets. Goodman (EC): Power resides in the Council of Ministers. If there is a European Parliament in the future which has powers to make laws etc., I will go along with it.

Ahmed (Islington): The EEC is very powerful: it controls food, one of the necessities of life. This can be directed in the interests of the whole working class.

Coleman (EC): D'Arcy holds a non-political idea of what political institutions are about. You could call Parliament a businessman's talking shop - also the GLC. Once workers use those elections to get conscious Socialists into them they can be converted into an instrument of emancipation. Such members do not really concede Socialists actually getting a majority in those institutions. D'Arcy made the point of an attempt to put the Party on the map as a criticism. If we do this it would not be just a little organisation but a serious one. We should make it clear that we can use this as an example of working class emancipation on an international basis. Those who actively work against putting the Party on the map do the Party a big disservice.

G. Wilson (N.W. London): There was no deposit when this was first discussed. There will be a time when this is opportune.

Carter (E. London): Proposals have gone forward to contest European election and should be covered by Party rule. Support view of D'Arcy and Goodman but see need to amend the Rule.

May (N.W. London): Question of publicity gained by contesting European election. There are 500,000 electors: with 60,000 we only distributed 20,000 manifestoes. The publicity will be nothing: it is a dead duck already that's why the parties won't spend on it. How are you going to distribute manifestoes in English in Europe. They'll be as bored as the British with the stuff going through their letter boxes. Many members have given a lifetime to it. If we contest these elections we will make ourselves a laughing stock. Does not preclude us taking part in activity, articles in the SS etc.

L. Cox (EC): Clause 6 is not limited to powers held by governments. Socialist principles explain machinery of government which includes administrative agencies of government and the whole network of governmental agencies. The EEC falls into that definition given by the Party.

Atkinson (EC/Gen Sec): Unless you do something about this rule the EC does not see where it stands: also have to justify the statement made by EC to Camden. We're talking about the situation where members of the capitalist class have similar interests. Already developing in Europe is police, armed forces, judiciary, to defend those interests. They have all the teeth.

Buick (Enfield & Haringey): The 1979 manifesto drafted by me did not intend that we should not contest Euro-elections. We should, for the publicity and propaganda. Important to show we are not just a national organisation. Feel Islington made a mistake in pulling out of the campaign. Deposit on Parliamentary elections is going up and the European deposit is likely to increase substantially. This may be the last election we can contest for some time. We are a world organisation and should be interested in international as well as national elections.

H. Cottis (Southend): Not only does the SP enter into the field of political activity but the working class does, to capture political power, and the European election might be a way of doing this.

AMENDMENT TO RULE 27a CARRIED 45 - 6

AMENDMENT TO RULE 28 THEREFORE TAKEN AS CARRIED

FLOOR RESOLUTION: C. Slapper (Islington) and Morris (Bolton):

"That in the light of Conference's clear recognition of the importance of engaging in electoral activity on a European level, the EC be recommended to inform the Parliamentary Committee that Conference favours, in principle, contesting the next possible Euro-election."

C. Slapper (Islington): Resolution to establish clearly position of Conference in session on the question of European elections.

D'Arcy (Camden): I don't know where Conference clearly recognised - it has been clearly stated that the thing is not a proposition for Socialists at all - the contesting of elections with a view to gaining political control. The only case you can put forward is to deal with this election from the point of view of getting publicity. That's different to what's in the D of P. We were told by the EC to re-think what we said: no principle involved if we contest for publicity - argue that case if you're going to argue this. We have been criticised for our efforts but constant bleeding of party funds on this type of activity has had a demoralising effect. Proposition is vague: put down an instructed

Resolution
Regley (Isl)
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No Ser
Ser

resolution so you have the reflection of the Party's views.

Begley (Islington): People go in for elections to further their interests: we say these would be served by supporting the Socialist candidate: what better can money be spent on than helping the electorate understand.

McLeary (Islington): Election campaign raises morale - very good thing for publicity and gets Party's name known around constituency. If all branches had contributed help we could have covered the constituency very well indeed. This Conference should do away with this negative attitude.

Slipson (S.W. London): We don't regard this as having more significance than national elections: capitalists have their fingers in anything so we should do the same. The resolution says 'if possible'.

May (N.W. London): Branch helped out in last election but the constituency could not be covered. For the cost of the deposit, manifesto printing etc. a whole page statement could go in the Guardian of the Party's case on Socialism and the Common Market. The Guardian also goes abroad.

Vanni (Glasgow): Branch opposed to contesting European election in particular and other elections in general. European election raises very little interest indeed and we can't contest in any meaningful way. Very few members turn up to do the work.

H. Cotteris (Southend): To tie ourselves down at the moment could be dangerous.

Cox (Birmingham): We have to decide where our money will reap the best rewards, but how do we measure this?

C. Slapper (Islington): Pessimistic to say past failures must inevitably be repeated. I have spoken to Glasgow members who take opposite view to Vanni. Many local papers cover a Euro-constituency. We carried a resolution to insert the word 'European' twice in our Rule book. Members must now go with the democratic decision. One reason Islington pulled out was that we did not have support from those branches. We now want the principle put into action.

FLOOR RESOLUTION CARRIED 19 - 16

Conference agreed to send fraternal greetings to the WSP of Ireland and to the Companion Peoples abroad.

Resolution 1(a) Lancaster:

P. Shannon (Lancaster): Already a lot of people repeating and restating positions to no useful purpose and discussion of minor details. At last ADM almost one-third of the items were not dealt with - this wastes time of members coming to London. Certain amount of paranoia about internal strife, and nervousness. Is it surprising people may not be clear about the Party's case - only two occasions to talk about important things. If someone wants more than 2 minutes it should be through the Chair.

Marshall (E. London): Two minutes too short for a delegate.

Trainer (S.W. London): Some people need more than 2 minutes to explain their case, but members should not repeat points and waffle on.

Cook (Birmingham): It takes skill and forethought to be concise. This is playing into the hands of experienced speakers.

P. Shannon (Lancaster): There is the discretion of the Chair to allow longer.

RESOLUTION LOST 24 - 26

Resolution 1(b) Swansea:

Moss (Swansea): We like to think this resolution has already had some effect because this year what we are complaining about has not happened.

Trainer (S.W. London): Branch does not think Standing Orders should be responsible for what goes on the Agenda. This should not be on the Agenda.

G. Wilson (N.W. London): You can't give Standing Orders carte blanche to take anything out of the Agenda.

Edwards (W. London): Presumably a branch could refer to the EC if S.O. rejected something, and the EC could rule.

Marshall (E. London): Citrine says if an amendment does this it should not be acceptable.

L. Cox (Standing Orders Cttee/EC): Pleased this has been raised so as to clarify situation. In the past S.O. had more control over the time. Time factor is important and not always enough time to get back to a branch to suggest an alternative. Delegates have the right to say something is out of order and they won't deal with it. The sooner items are sent in the sooner S.O. can consult.

Bennett (Manchester): Ruling items out of order at Conference does not work: on previous occasion Conference took the view that it was too late. S.O. have power to exclude certain things and a procedure to follow.

RESOLUTION CARRIED 40 - 8

Resolution 2(d) E. London:

Bantz (E. London): Branch recognises there are instances where EC members may need to

write to the EC but are opposed to them writing to complain about what another EC member has said at the table. It should be dealt with at the time or when EC minutes are read.

RESOLUTION CARRIED 25 - 10

Resolution 2(e) Islington: Amendment - Southend:

Begley (Islington): Branch wants to reaffirm importance of democracy in all Party business. We wish branches to keep resolutions as short as possible and for them to be reproduced in full in EC Minutes.

Simpson (S.W. London): Most resolutions to the EC are critical ones and if a branch has something of great length to say it should not use the EC Minutes but should circulate its views.

D'Arcy (Camden): Trouble in past with Haringey branch circulating their points of view via EC Minutes with long resolutions. Earlier this ^{year} the EC refused to publish resolutions over 100 words. Last January the branch received an EC resolution of 154 words. Let the rule apply equally to the EC.

Bradley (Enfield & Haringey): Haringey were concerned about how the majority of the then EC behaved.

Begley (Islington): EC's job is to receive resolutions, print them and act on them: not in favour of limiting number of words, just keep them to the bare minimum.

AMENDMENT LOST 7 - 43 RESOLUTION CARRIED 41 - 8

Resolution 2(f) Swansea: Amendment - Southend:

Moss (Swansea): Branch tried to solve conflict with propaganda and business meetings by requesting a number of copies of EC minutes to distribute to members and appoint a member to give a synopsis of significant matters the following week. Extra copies recently dried up as General Secreary instructed the Head Office Assistant only to send a couple. It is a small extra cost and work.

H. Cottis (Southend): Objected to word 'free' because it does cost money and the word was superfluous.

Cook (Birmingham): Key to the resolution is 'on request'.

D'Arcy (Camden): Probably cost £50/60 to debate this: can't branches spend a few coppers to photocopy their own copies.

McLeavy (HOA): We can produce them all at H.O. - ridiculous that branches have to pay for extra copies - branches would have to waste time getting copies.

Atkinson (Gen Sec): EC made decision and Gen Sec carried it out.

AMENDMENT LOST 13 - 30; RESOLUTION CARRIED 35 - 8

Saturday 21 April 1984 - commenced 1.20 p.m.

Resolution 7(c) Islington:

C. Slapper (Islington): Branch feels it essential to establish Party's position as a political organisation before dealing with other constructive items on the Agenda. Centres on whether it takes seriously Clause 6 of D of P. Branch suggests that failure to support this suggests that the Party should move away from conquest of political power. On a resolution like this on the EC, one member voted against. W. London's circular threw the conquest of political power into doubt. Question is whether we are prepared to see Party degenerate into a political sect. Branch determined not to accept any such compromise. We joined on basis of D of P. First the principle, then the practice. Little point in carrying this resolution and then become half-hearsed about 2(d).

Nicholson (W. London): We felt we ought to examine the position of the Party. The time might come when we might not have to use the ballot paper. Socialism might be obtained through workers demanding it. It is not scientific to say there is only one way to Socialism.

ROSS (N.W. London): We have been committed for many years and are in support of the democratic method. It is true there might be a change. Our support for 7(c) does not follow for 7(d) nor does it for a lot of members in the Party. The real position is what support is there - is it worthwhile participating in elections.

H. Cottis (Southend): At the moment the way forward is through Parliamentary activity. We're amazed this has come up on the Agenda. We take part at all opportunities.

D'Arcy (Camden): We're in position of agreeing with Islington that this is the Party's position. We have to deal with the situation as we see it now. What lies behind this proposal - as I understand it, that any branch which objects to the contesting of elections for whatever reasons will be guilty of action detrimental. This situation was put to Camden branch by the EC who asked us to reformulate our position after existing for over 50 years. Whether or not to contest has for years been purely what the state of play was in the Party. Lake's position was that we should wait until the Party has built up and this is the position of a lot of members.

Coleman (EC): Islington not out to attack anybody for opposing contesting elections at

are read. EC members
moment. That is perfectly compatible with membership of the Party. This resolution is same as that moved on the EC at the time of the Martin affair and one EC member voted against it. We could have written about that member. W. London circular made point that they are opposed to using Parliament: their 2nd circular quoted an old pamphlet saying we could not predict what may arise. If you don't get control of the state you fall into an Anarchist position - workers demand it and we'll get Socialism. Marx understood you could ^{not} have working class majority power unless you get hold of State power. W. London was asked what the other way was and said they did not know, but wanted to keep an open mind. Getting control of the state machine is principle, not dogma.

C. Slapper (Islington): Socialism coming through workers demanding it is not the position of the Party. W. London failed to explain what the alternative method could be and it came over as not participating in activity now. There is nothing else behind this resolution. It is just to affirm the Party's position.

Resolution 7(c) CARRIED 47 - 0

Resolution 7(d) Islington:

Ahmad (Islington): We cannot afford the idea that now is not the best time to contest. We may not be able to afford 600 seats but we can afford more than one. In the coming months there must be planning. Seat contested last June was very useful - local branch membership has risen considerably and the Party is better known in North London than it was.

Deutz (E. London): It is questionable to instruct the EC to produce detailed plans now for contesting 2 constituencies in the next election. Last time 2 branches planned to contest but one was unable to do so. Criticism in the past because arrangements had been left to the last minute. Can branches know now what their position will be in 3 or 4 years.

Ross (N.W. London): The controversy is that the time is not opportune for one constituency and branch is opposed to this idea. We will look at plans produced and might change our minds. Getting less than 100 votes is very disturbing. We did work on behalf of the Party at last election.

Hopwood (S.W. London): This doesn't commit us to contesting more than one constituency. Perhaps in past we did not plan sufficiently - preparation should start now. Bolton put forward terrific plans but they withdrew honourably because their activity moved along different lines.

Howell (Guildford): We think this is not opportune and that Islington are confusing the issue when they equate postponing activity with postponing activity in an election. We should use elections to urge people not to vote at all where we are not putting up candidates and to put our case. Cost is not just money it is loss of credibility when we demonstrate the microscopic size of the Party. We don't have to do our opponents' work for them. Money and effort can be better used. We should do work and have press conferences anyway.

Ahmad (Islington): After 6 weeks of argument on the Manifesto the EC said no. That was not in accordance with the democratic process. We made a lot of members after general election.

RESOLUTION 7(d) CARRIED 24 - 21

Resolution 7(e) Islington:

Dowsett (Islington): This has been raised because of the handout by branches which mentioned that Socialism would mean the gradual decline of the state. This is bound up with idea of transition period. Pre-conditions for Socialism - include majority understanding which excludes any necessity for retention of the State, parties, police, armed forces etc. Are those millions who have accepted Socialist ideas going to allow a continuance of what they have organised to abolish.

Carter (E. London): Important issue but not of basic principle. No mention in D of P of immediate abolition of state but of a conversion. Resolution lays down conditions without knowledge of what will exist at the time. Report of Committee on Production for Use, p.2 says "not objectives which can be achieved overnight".

Simpson (SW London): If resolution not carried, we could be put into position of being allied with the old Bolshevik left. The State serves to defend the privilege of the capitalist class. Not saying some institutions at present such as detention of child rapists would not remain but the coercive aspects of the State will be got rid of lock, stock and barrel.

May (NW London): Leaflet produced largely by one member but never finally adopted. When brought to EC by SW London branch, EC agreed to alteration to 'dismantling'. I see no fundamental difference and I regret I did not urge the branches to stand up to the EC and

save £60 on reprinting. How do you detain child molester except by coercion. The armed forces would be continued for as long as necessary in the light of conditions. W. Knox (Edinburgh): The whole of Marx's scholarship doesn't have a theory of the state. Different sections of the capitalist class have different interests which conflict at times. Sometimes the state has to act against sections of the capitalist class. The state is the product of the class struggle at any given time. Socialism must restructure institutions to make them work in a transition period but there must be a lot more work done on the theory of the state.

C. Slapper (Islington): It is a Leninist statement - ultimately a state capitalist position. Of course there is a difference between gradual decline and the immediate dismantling of the state. Constitutional issue as the leaflet was written by two members, the 3 branches concerned didn't vet it and the EC was not shown the text. If members wish to discuss a change in the Party's position, put an item on the Agenda.

Ross (NW London): Resolution is wrong. We're not in favour of the gradual decline, we said it happens because that is the way human activity happens. I think Socialists will saturate every activity all over the world. You can't do everything on the night, but can be well prepared.

Vanni (Glasgow): Slapper ignored what May said and the Conference resolution of 1976(?). Did the EC even bother to check past Party statements, and if not, why not.

D'Arcy (Camden): The statement was written as an introduction to a meeting and would have been explained by the speaker. If you abolish the instruments of oppression you cannot convert them into instruments of emancipation. 1978 Conference discussed "the State is not abolished it dies out." Some want to make a separation between the coercive part and the other side - health, education, etc. How the process will take place and the time factor will be dealt with by people at the time. You are making a free gift to people who wish to resist. Party takes the practical view - you will use the forces of the state if necessary. The first to go will be the army and coercive forces.

Deutz (E London): You can have situation where majority accelerating towards Socialism and at that time interesting things might be happening in society. People working in tax offices might think there wasn't much future in that. I was the speaker at the meeting and wasn't asked a single question on this subject. I spoke of the immediate doing away with the coercive element. Water, electricity etc. would have to be continued.

Bradley (Enfield & Haringey): Carter suggested the Production for Use Committee felt the state apparatus would remain - this is not so. D'Arcy's statement on the leaflet is a very serious theoretical error in terms of the Party position. I didn't join the Party for a world where some organisation could knock on my door at 4 a.m., gradually wake me up, take me gradually to prison and gradually have my opinions changed; not to set up another state, however benign. There is going to be one revolutionary act when there is an overwhelming majority.

D. Cottis (Southend): Lot of discussion superfluous. We should accept that the word gradual should never be used in any circumstances. No need to cook up excuses to try to explain it away.

Young (EC): Engels and Marx both used the word gradual. NW London branch asked me to put their view on this resolution. To pass it is theoretically fallacious and practically dangerous. Islington delegate's statement full of confusion. Quoted Anti-During on withering away of the state. Islington position is classical anarchist position and springs from their overnight socialism. It is anti-party, anti-working class. The state will wither away due to its redundancy.

Chesham (EC): A gradual decline can take 1,000 years. In Russia the state is not declining it is growing. Have reservations about the resolution but this was not the issue facing the EC on the leaflet. When considering this leaflet I called on previous Party statements on question of the State. Questions of the Day for one. Meals on wheels, water supply etc. are not aspects of the state. We're talking about coercive forces, police, armed forces etc. Don't want to give impression in our literature that we mean anything like what has occurred in Russia. Discussion has betrayed amazing amount of confusion. Three branches who have been adamant about vetting literature scrupulously permit one member to produce a statement. Whatever Marx etc. said, the case of the Party is essentially its own and has been developed over 80 years.

Coleman (EC): Deutz made point that a great deal will be solved before the Socialist revolution takes place. Consciousness of the working class develops and affects the whole of society. We have to say there will not be a Socialist state. There is confusion between 'state' and 'social administration'. Coercive power will be used in process of taking over but will then be immediately abolished. The state is a political concept. You cannot do away with it bit by bit - you either have it or you don't.

H. Walters (Islington): Some contributions reveal a major theoretical controversy, the idea that you can carry on as a Socialist party without understanding the position. I try

illustrate a transition period - I say it is now - in the process of getting working class consciousness. All qualitative changes happen suddenly. There are 2 processes of evolution - pre-history (unconscious) and history (conscious). If you are serious about this we should question a lot of what we have written and adhered to as a so-called Marxist party.

Atkinson (Gen Sec/EC): EC was faced with the leaflet already printed and that is why it did not defer consideration for research to be carried out on past decisions. I said the Party has often in the past used the word 'dismantling' and this was agreed. Whole argument fascinating - not only how these conclusions were reached in the past but how we thought, MCH can have new ideas and concepts and how a society which is becoming more attuned to millions becoming Socialists. Are we going to be faced with a police force with people becoming Socialists. It would do us all good to discuss this amicably and examine it and make a fresh exposition of what we have been looking at this afternoon.

P. Lawrence (EC): Surprised number of people confused about function of the state machine. Very clear in "Socialist Principles Explained". Error arises in the view that you just make members and then suddenly say "what do we do next?" Members will be formulating plans to ensure a speedy transformation of society. You must also ask how governments will be acting. You will get people acting differently.

Dowsett (Islington): It seems it was quite valid to put this on the agenda. "Historical Materialism" defines the state. We're not talking about transport, fire service etc. Workers consciously will change society. It is workers who run the state. Socialists will be in these organisations. Camden think certain functions of the state will be carried on. Where there is government there is no Socialism: where there is Socialism there is no government. No-one has answered the question. When people say the state will exist after Socialism is established, what function will the state, as I have defined it, going to have, and who is going to be oppressing?

RESOLUTION 7(e) CARRIED 35 - 13

EC Report - Feasibility Study on Head Office:

C. Slapper (Islington): Personally alarmed at suggestion in report that we could let ground floor to other groups or parties and that we might not have access to part of our building.

Buick (Enfield & Haringey): We should move to delete this from the report.

FLOOR RESOLUTION - Buick and Vein (Enfield & Haringey): "That the paragraph beginning 'The ground floor....' be deleted from the EC's Report."

Cottis (Southend): There may be practical reasons for not letting out the ground floor of H.O. but no objection in principle.

Howell (Ad Hoc Committee): Rather naive to suggest the proposal is to allow organisations opposed to us to use the premises. It is an idea to get a bit of cash in.

FLOOR RESOLUTION CARRIED 21 - 4

L. Cox (EC): It would be good if we could invite interested opposition to HO on a regular basis for good discussion with rational people, with refreshments etc.

Resolution 4(a) Islington - Amendment Southend:

McLeavy (Islington): Front of H.O. unattractive - as HOA I see it every day. Branch ideas include replacing perspex with good glass; mirrors, slot machine to put money in to see any particular journal; press-button information on meetings; computer print-out. We're not bothered about whitewashing.

Atkinson (Gen Sec): We have a Premises Committee and ideas should go to them.

Chesham (EC & ex-Premises Committee): There is a case for improvement but think very carefully - previous glass windows smashed 3 or 4 times.

Hopwood (S W London): Premises Committee 's report mentions the front as included in work to be done. We need larger committee which can do the necessary work.

H. Walters (Premises Committee): To white paint the front would invite graffiti and would need regular re-painting. New armour-plated glass would cost around £600. We need plenty of help.

L. Cox (EC): We could provide a wall for graffiti which could be cleared off every week and a new lot would then come.

AMENDMENT CARRIED 35 - 9; SUB RESOLUTION CARRIED 39 - 6

Forms 'A' Scrutiny Committee:

C. Slapper (Islington): Asked what happens when Forms 'A' are rejected by the Committee and whether they were followed up. No member of the committee was present.

Production for Use Committee:

P. Lawrence (for Committee): Difficult to interpret response if all we get from delegates is total silence - perhaps they're reserving comments for the item for discussion.

Cook (Birmingham): Not had opportunity to read report.

Moss (Swansea): It is very interesting indeed and the comrades should be congratulated on

the work they have put into it.

Buick (Enfield & Haringey): I think the 2nd report is better than the first one - it is shorter and more concise.

Resolution 5(a) Manchester: Addendum - Enfield & Haringey:

Bennett (Manchester): Possible way of increasing circulation of the SS by flyposting alongside posters advertising meetings, and for bookshops selling the SS. We are opposed to the addendum as we don't think commercial distribution is necessary.

Craig (Edinburgh): Opposed to resolution but will support the addendum because resolution puts cart before the horse.

C. Slapper (Islington): Should have a box on the poster giving address where to obtain the SS and to make them topical, space for a facsimile of the latest issue, month by month.

ADDENDUM LOST 13 - 32; RESOLUTION CARRIED 30 - 15

SUNDAY 22 April 1984 - commenced 10.15 a.m.

Branch verbal reports were given for the following branches: Birmingham, Bolton, Camden, Edinburgh, Enfield & Haringey, Guildford, Islington, Lancaster, Kensington, Manchester, NW London, Southend, SW London, Swansea, West London, Glasgow, E. London.

S. Coleman (Central Organiser): Important to have these reports and the item should be placed on future agendas. Mentioned series of speakers' classes being held at Islington Branch but involving members from other branches. Requested that Groups present be asked to give verbal reports.

Verbal reports were then heard on behalf of Doncaster, Bournemouth and Bristol Groups.

Fraternal greetings were received from Com. Fenton, WSP of U.S., and from Com. Alec Hart in Johannesburg.

Resolution 5(b) Islington:

C. Slapper (Islington): For years members have wished to break into the modern media but the video age opens up certain possibilities. Many groups of all kinds make and distribute videos. Cost relatively minimal - hiring of appropriate equipment £100/200 perhaps, or it might be possible to borrow equipment. There are members keen to get on with this, including a comrade in France who is professionally involved in this medium. We want a committee to produce details of what is involved, circulate this for ADM.

Bennett (Manchester): Who is going to see the video and under what conditions would it be available to workers?

Cook (Birmingham): We could not see quite how the tapes would work but this has been established and I think the same would apply to video tapes.

Deutz (E London): Branch opposing this - concerned that there's nothing worse than amateur-made films. Would need a member to present it - not enough on its own - like SS - no good someone just reading it.

H. Cottis (Southend): Not a matter for Conference - part of general propaganda of Party.

Simpson (SW London): Don't think we can vote against this constructive suggestion. Let's have a go and see how it turns out.

Ross (NW London): Would like to hear more about distribution. If its a short film and not amateur it could be shown at our meetings - it would be helpful.

E. Knox (Edinburgh): I work with videos as a teaching aid and assure members that videos made by some groups are far from amateur. You can video from TV with ^{voice-}over of the Party case. Videos may mean you don't need to send a Party speaker.

G. Slapper (Islington): Have had some experience of producing these. No marked difference in film produced on video and those we are accustomed to seeing on TV. Immense value to supplement meetings. No. of workers with access to videos has increased.

Moran (Islington): Those with free hands should try to see on what basis they have reservations. What is the propaganda value of communication - it is what the Party is all about. Video is the main growth industry.

Coleman (EC): Main reason to produce video films is that the form of our propaganda is out-dated. People don't like going to lectures - it reminds them of going to school. They feel intimidated. The form now is TV. We should take this into account. We believe that there is the ability in the Party. We keep our own principles but form is dictated by what workers want.

D'Arcy (Camden): Cinema, television and now video. We have to realise that we have no future if we go in for gimmicks. How do you develop propaganda other than through the outdoor platform - it is the only way to develop the Party. No chance of making an impact on the media - the only avenue is outdoor propaganda.

H. Walters (Islington): We should consider any avenue of advertising or getting our propaganda out. Disagree with D'Arcy - that avenue of disseminating ideas is a dead duck.

Committee has been very successful with all kinds of talks on tape. Tapes can be used by members and non-members. We would have lost out if we had not exploited this.
W. Knox (Edinburgh): We should not denigrate the outdoor platform as much as has been done by some speakers. Video is an important development. Difficulties in getting these to the working class. I think SS is the most important avenue and more money should be spent on it. Video is exciting and as a revolutionary party we should be in favour of change.

C. Slapper (Islington): It seems incredible that a branch can vote against this on the basis of not knowing about distribution. The investigation would take this up. Tapes Committee could have a Video section, we could put adverts in newspapers and the SS perhaps. Copies could be made and sent to branches who would have to hire the equipment as was done at Friday evening's meeting. There is an 'alternative' film network of people who collect and swap videos with minority viewpoints. The Party has done excellently on the media - phone-ins, and five appearances on London commercial radio over the past 2 years. There are open access programmes on TV and we could have a video ready.

RESOLUTION 5(b) CARRIED 37 - 10

Resolution 5(c) Islington:

. Slapper (Islington): This follows on the last item. Party has become well-known in the North-East though local radio phone-ins. Unfortunately Sunderland are not here. Phone-ins in London area put us on route to longer broadcasts we had. Finance has been a problem for the North-East. EC has had some arguments about this, though they did give £50 previously, but confusion arose. We should ask Sunderland branch to report back to us and they could record all the time they get on the air, and the cost.

Hopwood (SW London): Queried the £50, whether the branch still holds this or was it to pay an outstanding bill.

Atkinson (Gen Sec): On-going problem between Sunderland and the EC. EC attitude was to give them every assistance to establish a fund and some record of feedback to branches to encourage the EC to give further to the fund. EC does not know what happened to the fund. Branch was divided on the whole matter. Absence of the branch is something no doubt the Central Organiser will discuss.

Procedural resolution - Moss (Swansea) & Simpson (SW London): "Next business."

CARRIED 16 - 12

Further procedural resolution - Edwards (W London) and H. Cottis (Southend):

"that the Chair be instructed to interpret the vote 'Next business' as 'That the vote be taken' on the instructed resolution." CARRIED 21 - 12

RESOLUTION 5(c) LOST 18 - 26

Resolution 5(d) Birmingham:

Cook (Birmingham): We can do with a symbol - I have seen a possible one, i.e. part of the design in the new World Socialist journal - the 'S'. Something simple like that ~~xxx~~ which can be drawn with a few lines, not complicated like our badge.

Ahmad (Islington): A logo can be like a rubber stamp capable of being used anywhere as an advert.

RESOLUTION 5(d) CARRIED 41 - 5

FLOOR RESOLUTION - Trainer and Simpson (SW London): "That this logo be designed in conjunction with Companion Parties." CARRIED 27 - 0

Resolution 4(b) Swansea:

Moss (Swansea): This was discussed as an item for Discussion last year. Nothing to do with joining the Party. Party aims to foreshadow the kind of society it looks for - non-elitist or hierarchical. If people have to pass a test, the fundamental idea of self-determined activity goes by the board. We've only had test since about 1950. We should take on trust members will behave in responsible way. Not unknown that accredited speakers get the Party into hot water. Speakers will become aware that they need to put more work into it or branches will get the message to them by not inviting them to speak.

Trainer (SW London): Don't think members would get on platform if they could not handle meeting.

Young (EC): Test introduced to protect speakers in war situation.

Dowsett (Islington): Branch feels necessary to replace speakers test with something else. Speakers classes on informal lines is practice Party should adopt instead.

L. Cox (EC): Test not perfect but best we have at moment. The damage might already have been done by the member who makes a mistake. Members on equal terms but some called upon to stand as accredited representatives of the Party. Idea is to ensure an elementary knowledge on various aspects of Party's case. Does not imply superiority.

Edwards (W London): Member speaking on behalf of the Party is expected to know more than that which is covered by the joining formalities.

H. Cottis (Southend): More important than test is organisation of practical experience

e.g. courses.

C. Slapper (Islington): Last year's EC set up Ad Hoc Committee to look at the Speakers' Test with a view to updating it.

D'Arcy (Camden): Rarely did the examining committee use all the questions - there were a few key ones. Length of examination depended on member's knowledge. There were a few books felt to be essential. The speaker is never the judge of his own ability.

Vanni (Glasgow): Not true that member cannot speak unless he has taken speakers test. We all know speakers and writers we all wish were not. Your only safeguard is to have a test.

Chesham (EC): There is a lot of truth in saying self-praise is no self-recommendation. You have to accept that some know more than others. Party has to protect itself. Logical extension of examination of members joining.

Skelton (Central): In Socialist society you'll still hope that surgeons will have been tested before they take out your tonsils. After taking speakers test I felt reassured: there is a positive side to this.

Gluck (Islington): Branch feels a course would be better than a test. It could include aspects of the media and how to handle it.

Moss (Swansea): If test introduced as protection during war it was not then a need within the Party. Passing the test doesn't mean anything and says nothing about speakers' ability as communicators of ideas. We could keep the speakers test but not make it compulsory.

RESOLUTION 4(b) LOST 17 - 28

FLOOR RESOLUTION - Critchfield (Kensington) and Bennett (Manchester):

"This Conference recommends that the questionnaire for the New Speakers and the Parliamentary Tests should be simplified and brought up-to-date." AGREED

Resolution 4(c) Islington:

Ahmad (Islington): Idea to increase membership and extend our name. Sell it for financial gain. It could reflect history of Socialism from a date - not the birth of Christ - but a date significant to the Socialist movement like the birth of Karl Marx.

Critchfield (Kensington): It could be self-financing. An opportunity for the Party generally to co-ordinate its timetables of activity of, say, branch meetings.

ook (Birmingham): Proposal should be forward looking to show what we are going to able to do from then on. Conference and ADM dates could be printed in the diary.

Coleman (EC/Central Organiser): Make sure it's not a 5 year diary.

Ahmad ((Islington): A new diary based on a new calendar.

RESOLUTION 4(c) CARRIED 20 -14

Publicity Committee Report:

Edwards (W London): Could we spend on a larger more infrequent advert rather than the small Guardian ads.

Simpson (for Committee): We have not heard branch views on adverts generally. Idea of regular ads is that it is more effective. We suggested branches appoint branch publicity liaison officers.

Deutz (E London): Where several branches advertise in the same issue it means extra cost printing the Party's name several times. Information could be incorporated in 1 ad.

Simpson (C'ttee): Committee can't be responsible for branches inserting their own ads.

Goodman (EC): Guardian ads brought 460 replies but we don't seem to get follow-up. Cost is £1.30 a head. SS as such is never advertised: EC has taken this up and it will be advertised on first Friday each month. I am for increasing expenditure but in a more worthwhile way.

Skelton (Central): Would like to know how many people who get free literature take out subscriptions or join branches/groups - this should have been in the report. What steps to check same people after 3 months are not getting further free literature. Has Guardian been made to correct error referred to in April SS.

Simpson (for C'ttee): C'ttee now for first time is a committee and is meeting regularly.

Financial Statement:

Several questions to and answers from Treasurer (Com. P. Wilson) re General Election figures and Islington branch.

D'Arcy (Camden): What is proposed re Treasurer's report that money will only last to next Conference. We have to cut back to cope with this emergency situation.

Hopwood (SW London): Good response to appeal and there is not a lot we can cut back on. We have to spend and get money in. Some branches holding a lot of money which perhaps they could give to H.O. We have increased dues - perhaps members can pay. We don't want to cut back.

C. Slapper (Islington): Must avoid unnecessary panic. Income has increased and expenditure reduced. Emphasis should be on getting money in, not cutting back.

McLeavy (Islington): We could advertise for donations to the Party.

ite (EC): EC fares - they could be cut.

D'Arcy (Camden): Treasurer clearly concerned. Conference must decide to cut back. We should let lower part of H.O. and save on rates. Cut back number of SS.

Atkinson (Gen Sec/EC): Would Treasurer mention previous years' Schedule 'A' tax.

P. Wilson (Treasurer): These are Com. Waite's accounts. My circular suggested if you treat income from dues, donations and sales at present and off-set expenditure there was a shortfall of around £15,000. There are legacies - over past 5 years over £40,000. Not my responsibility to anticipate such sums. We should plan on basis of what we can currently raise to pay for current needs. Need to increase this three-fold if people have dues waived for whatever reason. We could publish literature which just meets costs but we do not do that. SS sold for 30p when it should sell at 50p to break even. Publicity and propaganda is direction which legacies should be channelled as much as possible.

Resolution 7(a) Southend:

H. Cottis (Southend): Treasurer has covered a lot of the points. We should have guidelines as to what we're going to do. Current intention is to draw the facts to the Party's attention.

Morgan (Islington): Support resolution. Our object to spend money on propaganda and publicity.

D'Arcy (Camden): A piece of piety - all very vague - not a proposition in it. How can you cope with the deficit. You have to decide how to cut back. Everyone who has any ideas on anything is producing reams of rubbish. You have built up a big bureaucracy and you have to stop it.

Trainer (SW London): Branch opposed on ground that we can't put a strict limit on what gets spent on what. What if we don't get much in donations - do we stop propaganda and just administer H.O.

Ross (NW London): Items on financial statement - photocopier and central heating. I hope these items won't be there again. I'm sure there are members who could get to grips with this with the Treasurer and come to some conclusion. Resolution not necessary.

Goodman (EC): Agree propaganda and publicity first priority. Resolution says the only income on which Party can rely must be spent on H.O. For sake of organising HO we have to have a worse SS. People won't keep on dying.

Morgan (Islington): Items missing from the budget include electoral activity. Don't adopt a conservative attitude.

Cottis (Southend): Resolution is to inform the membership and try to give a realistic understanding of financial position. Have to give encouragement for on-going money to the Party. Ways are being tried. There will never be enough money. There is no magic about the SS.

RESOLUTION 7(a) LOST 9 - 30

FLOOR RESOLUTION - Morris (MBolton) and Hopwood (SW London): "That in view of the financial situation, this Conference is concerned that only half of the membership pay dues, and would like branches to urgently review their waiving of dues." AGREED

Resolution 6(b) Manchester:

J. Thompson (Manchester): For first week of month branch sells previous month's SS. If there is a meeting advert it is not being seen. We're having good sales.

Goodman (for SSPC): There is a closing date but often meeting notices phoned or sent very late. Committee could comply with resolution but notices would have to be in by first of the previous month and meeting arrangements would have to be made earlier.

Moss (Swansea): Tried ~~to~~ this a few years ago. SS should arrive a week before the next month. Psychological advantage in selling - contents would not be less topical.

Tenner (SSPC): Committee has tried to get SS out on Tuesday preceding first of month. Difficulty is at beginning of year when printer closes down for 3 weeks at Christmas. To have January SS in first week, copy would have to go in with the December copy and it could mean the December SS only lasting one week.

RESOLUTION 6(b) CARRIED 34 - 9

FLOOR RESOLUTION Cook (Birmingham) and H. Cottis (Southend): "This Conference recommends that copy for the January SS be submitted simultaneously with that for the December issue." AGREED

C. Slapper (Islington): Although very happy with SS generally, branch concerned about the use of terms "the Russians", "the Americans" etc. instead of "the Russian Government" etc. Had corresponded with SSPC on this.

Craig (Edinburgh): Felt SS had become a little obsessed with anniversaries.

Tapes Committee Report:

Chesham (for C'ttee): New recordings available and lists have gone to branches. Most recordings are centred around meetings in London area; C'ttee would welcome tapes of meetings elsewhere in the country for possible inclusion in tapes library. 3 members on

committee, 2 mainly concerned with recording at meetings and third member tidying up and making copies. New fast-copying machine in use which is making considerable difference to time factor.

FLOOR RESOLUTION - Cook (Birmingham) and H. Cottis (Southend): "That the EC's report, as amended, be adopted." AGREED

Resolution 7(b) Birmingham:

Faultless (Birmingham): Suggest we erase issue of J.R. Martin to prevent members not coming to rational conclusion. Resolution concerns principle of allowing members not only to hold differences of view on a wide number of issues. Possible implication of expulsion of Martin that Party may try to lay down definite position on every major issue, not only Parliamentary road, but attitude to trade unions, class etc. and expect every member to adhere totally on every single issue. Not realistic. Would be against basic tenet that people can think for themselves. Branch always been flexible and doesn't inflict mental strait-jacket on members or prospective members. Should not be necessary to exclude members who could not subscribe to particular issues. Don't think Party should become a broad church - somehow balance has got to be reached.

Simpson (SW London): Good intentions of Birmingham. Of course things can be debated but they are in contradictory position because they say capture of political power cannot be debated but other matters can be.

Trainer (SW London): You'll remember we carried Resolution 7(c) 47 - 0.

G. Wilson (NW London): Opposing as see no reason for Martin's name to be included.

Edwards (W London): This should be passed as unless D of P is regarded as a catechism you have got to allow members if they have any queries on Party case or D of P to put their points of view.

C. Slapper (Islington): Support very much idea of tolerance and discussion but cannot accept wording of this resolution. Its import less tolerant than appears, e.g. attitude to reforms - one of a group of topics which cannot be discussed - we feel can and must be discussed. We don't want a hierarchy of subjects which can or cannot be discussed. Party is in need of establishing greater educational/discussion facilities to be more sound. The Form 'A' is start rather than end of education in the Party.

Chesham (EC): Function of debate is to clarify views on an academic issue. If they are not clear, why are they in the Party when they have presumably accepted the Party's position on the subject. The capture of political power is just as much a fundamental issue.

RESOLUTION 7(b) LOST 19 - 26

Resolution 7(f) SW London; Amendments Kensington:

Simpson (SW London): We feel language would seem archaic when read by non-members and a footnote would put it in historical perspective. We think it will encourage more investigation of what the principles stand for by non-members.

Critchfield (Kensington): Party should not apologise for D of P or say it is difficult to read or understand. I find people think Party/very clear. "Retained" better than "maintained".

literature

Edwards (W London): If people not satisfied they should put proposals to alter it.

G. Wilson (NW London): Would welcome D of P in up-to-date language - may be it would clarify it. If people aren't satisfied with them they shouldn't come into the Party.

H. Cottis (Southend): We stand by the D of P as they are. They are well-understood by everyone who takes seriously the SS. People don't come to us to criticise the D of P.

D'Arcy (Camden): Opposed because resolution and amendments assume Party is in favour of holding onto D of P mainly as an historical statement.

McLeavy (Islington): This would look rather silly. Either we don't change it or we do, but don't have a note at the bottom.

Ross (N W London): Always afraid someone will butcher the D of P.

L. Cox (EC): It is the original wording that is the historical document.

Coleman (CC): D of P is not all-embracing as D'Arcy says.

Simpson (SW London): Whole point is that original wording of D of P is being retained.

KENSINGTON AMENDMENT (Delte 'We stress...') LOST 10 - 35

KENSINGTON AMENDMENT LOST 21 - 24

SW LONDON RESOLUTION RE LOST 9 - 38

Resolution 7(g) Guildford:

Rubin (Guildford): Some of the confusion about Party's case stems from the language of D of P. Terms like 'muster under the banner', master class' etc.

Simpson (SW London): Totally disagree that there is any confusion in D of P. Agree it could be re-worded and I have seen several ideas on how. Some confusion in resolution which says it should be altered and retained unaltered.

G. Wilson (NW London): What is need for change and how many times are we going to update it.

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Knox (Edinburgh): Most members felt it was clear what D of P was after. By re-wording you are opening a can of worms and the whole controversy of the Party's case.

Trainer (SW London): In another 80 years time we could be back here amending the D of P again.

D'Arcy (Camden): Some years ago committee appointed to look at re-writing D of P but have not reported back yet. If it could be said to be confusing there would be a case - if it was in Chaucer's English. Once you start you have never finished with it.

Dowsett (Islington): D of P an excellent document - the language a bonus rather than a disadvantage. It shows consistency - that we've stuck to our principles and the position is the same as it was in 1904. To avoid any misconceptions would involve a massive D of P.

Goodman (EC): Few years ago, some thought language in the Party in general was old fashioned and they went off and formed World of Free Access.

Howell (Guildford): We stand by the D of P but have found this form of arcane wording can reinforce the prejudices of parties on the left that we're an old-fashioned party. How many times would we have to re-write it? - as many times as it takes.

P. Lawrence (EC): What we're looking for is a D of P appropriate for a world socialist movement and what we've got is a 19th century and thoroughly British document. Important to separate forms of language from the essential meaning of the principles. No mention in the Principles that we are a world movement; they don't make allowance for state capitalism - they were drawn up before that emerged. There is no 'order of social evolution'. It can be updated and it is vital that we do it.

Skelton (Central): Master class is a Russian usage 20th century. Some will read confused meanings. How fast is any ~~xx~~ change. We can still understand 19th century literature. Some members find it difficult to confront members of the public with something they find difficult. D of P is basis of membership.

Coleman (EC): Completely neutral whether they get changed or not: either way I will put them forward. If people don't understand them I will explain them. It won't solve your problem. Party doesn't need to waste time arguing about this. As workers come into the Party and it grows, that is the point when all these things change and we'll throw out traditions. Whilst we're small we have to keep all the inaccuracies etc.

Rubin (Guildford): Not a contradiction to retain the historical D of P in the SS as well as a new version.

AMENDMENT LOST 14 - 35; RESOLUTION 7(g) LOST 5 - 44

Resolution 7(h) Southend: Amendment (Glasgow):

H. Cottis (Southend): As we now have a World Socialist journal and various supporters, sympathisers and parties in other parts of the world feeling is that we should change the name - not a big change. Our suggestion would be immediately recognisable.

Trainer (SW London): It is the content of the Party that counts: we oppose this.

Buick (Enfield & Haringey): Support the amendment as we have done for last 20/30 years. Even if we keep the title as SPGB we should adopt practice of referring to ourselves as The Socialist Party.

D'Arcy (Camden): If you could produce overwhelming case we could look at this. You don't overcome difficulties by change of name. Trouble is we have taken on too much in this international business. We should consolidate ourselves here. There will come a time when there'll be a world socialist international.

Ross (NW London): Even in the States the WSP did not survive. We would have to find a name which would safeguard our position.

Ahmad (Islington): The word Socialism has different meanings to different people. Name change should be such as will distinguish the Party - the Democratic Socialist Party is the only name we should use and the working class can understand.

C. Slapper (Islington): Majority of branch favours leaving the name as it stands and dropping for purposes of propaganda wherever possible 'Great Britain'. Also increasing use of the phrase 'World Socialist Movement' (WSM).

Vanni (Glasgow): Voting against resolution and our own amendment - branch divided on this issue. Lack of depth on part of those wishing change. Would lay ourselves open to all sorts of queries about what kind of socialism we represent. A minority of companion parties use word World. In Australia another organisation hijacked their name. We're not in that position. Move in the 60's to remove word Socialist and substitute One World. Name can be stolen by another organisation and you could be back to square one.

Moran (Islington): Glasgow worried as they already have sectarian problem with Protestant and Catholic groups there.

H. Walters (Islington): Founders must have thought the name best expressed what Party stood for.

AMENDMENT LOST 8 - 39; RESOLUTION LOST 6 - 42

RESOLUTION 7(i) Lancaster - LOST 5 - 42

FLOOR RESOLUTION W. Knox (Edinburgh) and McLaughlan (Bolton): "That this Conference recommends the EC to set up a committee to enquire into the feasibility of, in the first instance, holding the ADM and, if successful, the Conference, outside London."

W. Knox (Edinburgh): There must be advantages and disadvantages. It would give the Party a national identity and would make members in the rest of the country more part of the Party and get away from the regular London bitching. Certain branches have shown they have the logistics to arrange a large event, e.g. Bolton Weekend School. It might cost more money. We have been coming to London for 80 years.

Atkinson (Gen Sec): Asked for any comments. As Party grows HO is becoming increasingly more difficult to accommodate ADM but it does not cost us anything. We did send a questionnaire but not much response.

ADDENDUM - Edwards (W London) and Moss (Swansea) "provided that the cost involved is not considered excessive by the EC."

ADDENDUM CARRIED OVERWHELMINGLY: SUB-RESOLUTION CARRIED OVERWHELMINGLY
ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION - It was agreed to take Item 5 first.

Carter (E London): Have to contrast sort of meetings held today with those held a few years ago. It was a regular feature that a central London meeting would be held at time of Labour Party conference, any war situation, etc. Meetings more in line with developments taking place in capitalism and dealing with our main opponents. Would like to hear from Propaganda Committee on this. Branches often ran series of meetings and Party deployed large number of speakers. This seems to have died out. Tendency for meetings to be handled by small number of speakers has thrown tremendous burden on those speakers. Concerned that Propaganda Committee, as in past, should have list of speakers' specialist subjects, availability etc. Party's indoor meetings will only prosper if branches get active.

Coleman (Propaganda Committee): Party does run as many meetings as it can. By and large up to branches to arrange these. More debates in past year or so than in past 20 years put together. We are involved in topical activity; constantly encouraging new speakers. Fallacious to say more speakers used in the past; we contact a lot of speakers who say they can't do meetings; some won't travel; some ask not to be asked to speak until they indicate their availability. Questionnaire to speakers was being dealt with by a member who resigned taking the papers with her. If branches request a particular speaker we act on that. We have liaised with E. London on their series of meetings. I find this item completely redundant.

D'Arcy (Camden): Not too happy with kind of meeting being run here. They seem to be beside the point. Speakers have got to put Party's case and seem also to have to entertain the members with a good night out. Absolutely necessary to try to get to the heart of the issue of the class struggle. I think these meetings are futile - get back to the basics of economics, history and politics. I've been a speaker for a number of years and I haven't been asked to speak in the past 8 years. Certain amount of nepotism in the Propaganda Committee.

Rubin (Guildford): Branch is growing quite rapidly and we are the best judges of what attracts people to meetings.

Trainer (SW London): The Olga Maitland debate was the best meeting I have ever attended with an audience of 300-odd people and 70 who could not get in. If D'Arcy is worried about meetings on unemployment why doesn't he do them himself in his branch?

Dowsett (Islington): Is subject of the Maitland debate - war - not to do with the class struggle?

W. Knox (Edinburge): This is classic example of why you should move the Conference outside London.

Item 4 - SW London: Delegates agreed to hear P. Lawrence (Production for Use Committee) first.

P. Lawrence (for Committee): You've seen the report: debate centres on how Socialism will implement in a practical way production for use, and is taking place inside and outside the Party - various books coming forward - I think because of the total disillusion with the Labour Party - some by people who like to think of themselves as Socialists, but they are looking at how production would take place in a market situation. Our Party is the only one which can offer a practical way of how to produce for need in the absence of a market system by self-regulating production for use. This will add a great deal of force to our case and give it much more credibility. Self-regulation poses some problems for the development of production in Socialism and members should look at this very closely.

W. Knox (Edinburgh): I wonder how the Party is going to respond to some of the challenging statements in this document especially when we say that Socialism will be a world of abundance and some of the statements that we in the western world will have to accept a reduction in the standard of living.

Imdad (Islington): I don't think we should worry about reducing our standard of living because the working class will take over the means of production and produce what is necessary and will increase production. In places like South America there will be no more dictatorship and they will be able to produce for need - at present they have to produce what they are told to produce. Primitive methods still being used in places like China.

G. Wilson (NW London): We're no authority on production for use: all we know is that there will be production for use and we'll produce sufficiency.

Deutz (E London): Pity this comes in last few minutes of Conference. We may be sure we can discuss it at ADM and we should read it and discuss it in Branches.

Buick (Enfield & Haringey): I did not read into the report that we would have to consume less in the western world.

Moss (Swansea): Committee has thrown out a challenge to the Party. The idea has appeared in the SS that living standards would have to go down in the western world. Problem is we have always said people will have more, not less. A lot of people could not accept less. A lot on high standard would be all right but, say, pensioners, would be destitute. Our case is not a humanitarian one - it based on self-interest. If living standards have to go down, it will be in the interests of all. Party should be cautious about accepting what is being said, but it is an on-going debate.

Cottis (Southend): We can be well-nourished on what would appear to be a lower standard of living. You have to go into this and find out what you are talking about.

Skelton (Central): Lot of work has gone into this. Statistical exercise may not say exactly what people want. Diagram on page 10 shows democratic process and self-regulation may conflict: diagram 3 shows a bureaucratic scheme. I don't want to see a socialism where councils decide things.

Grant (EC): Don't forget standard of living is a measure which we take from our capitalist rulers. We can re-evaluate this. We might in short term have less, say, coffee, if land used for food more urgently needed.

P. Lawrence (for Committee): Concentrate on the fact that capitalism will never produce a sufficiency for total human needs. It cannot do so. This must mean that Socialism will inherit a position of material scarcity. I will write to branches answering some of the other points raised.

CONFERENCE ADJOURNED AT 6 p.m.